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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, December 28, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Food for New Year's Eve." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

"Sweet sleep and pleasant dreams." There's an old familiar good-night wish -- one of the nicest of wishes, it always seems to me. Next Monday night probably your friends will be sending it after you as you go home from seeing the new year in. But whether those good wishes come true is another question.

One of my friends often says that he believes few people sleep easy on the first night of the year. In fact, he'll tell you that he thinks this night probably has the annual record for troubled dreams. And he'll tell you what he believes is the reason. No, he doesn't lay the blame on the traditional guilty conscience. And he doesn't lay it on worry over new year's resolutions, either. No, he thinks it's food that prevents sweet sleep and pleasant dreams -- the kind of food most people eat at new years' midnight suppers.

As a matter of fact, most of us aren't very wise about midnight menus. We don't build our late suppers for slumber afterward. We may be sensible about our diet all day long but when midnight parties arrive we just fill ourselves up with all sorts of food that we don't need at all. Of course, I've often heard about those hardy souls who can finish off a platter of fried eggs and potatoes, several cups of coffee, doughnuts, pancakes and sausages, welsh rabbit and so on and then go home and sleep like a top. I've heard of people like that but I haven't seen them very often. Most of us can't take in much heavy food and then sleep well on it. Most of us find that rich, hearty dishes, especially those that contain a good deal of fat, or a good deal of sweet, or the combination don't set so well at midnight as at noontime. The reason probably is that we can use up all this high-calorie food in the midst of an active day but just before bedtime we don't need it -- it's just an extra and unnecessary tax on the digestion.

Just think back now over the kind of refreshments you usually have at new years suppers. Maybe a rich soup or creamed dish to start with. Some people serve waffles or pancakes plus sausages and sirup. Others serve rich cheese dishes like welsh rabbit or thick toasted cheese sandwiches. Then, a familiar midnight dish is lobster newburg. Another is a rich salad -- chicken or turkey or salmon salad dressed with quantities of mayonnaise. Usually you find a great bowl of potato chips ready for guests to nibble on and another of salted nuts. You're likely to have coffee or chocolate and whipped cream and doughnuts. As

for sweets, there's candy, of course -- soft rich candy; and lots of cake -- rich cake, too, usually devils food or fruit cake or plum pudding. Then, mince pie is an old favorite. And ice cream and whipped cream desserts.

Well, there you have a familiar collection of hearty foods. And if you lie awake after eating many of them, you don't need to lay your wakefulness to your sins.

But there are plenty of good things to eat at a late hour that won't lie so heavy afterwards. Most people want something hot on a night like this. And they enjoy something with plenty of flavor -- refreshing flavor, if possible. But you don't need to serve hearty foods to get these two qualities.

Let's think over some good foods for warmth but not weight. Some of the milk soups make good selections for this hour -- the light milk soups like cream of celery, cream of mushroom, or oyster stew. Certain creamed dishes are . . . too -- creamed eggs on toast, creamed mushrooms and so on. But don't make these dishes too rich by adding a lot of cream and butter. Some people think hot broths are even better if they're carefully seasoned -- hot clam broth, say, or hot chicken broth, or hot tomato juice. Then you have your choice of the hot spiced fruit drinks -- hot spiced cider, hot spiced grapejuice and so on. A light cocoa spiced with a little cinnamon is delicious and warming, too.

If you have salad at midnight, have one that is light, crisp, tart and flavorful, that looks and tastes refreshing rather than one heavy with oil. Fruit salad with French dressing; a colorful vegetable salad; a bowl of crisp greens -- all these will be as welcome at midnight as at luncheon or dinner. A big many-colored relish dish will make a hit with midnight guests, too -- crisp white sticks of celery and orange carrot sticks; olives, pickles, dried fruit stuffed with a little cream cheese. A great bowl of fruit adds looks as well as enjoyment to your table.

Since most people like the flavor of cheese, a little of it often adds a good deal to the zest of the meal. If you use tart snappy cheese, a little will go a long way and you won't make your food too hearty with it. Cheese crackers, a bit of grated cheese on toast, a little cheese for stuffing -- here's the way to make use of cheese for flavor.

Well, now, I have two menus for simple new year's eve suppers. Perhaps you'd like to jot them down. Serve your guests a meal like this and you won't feel guilty when you wish them pleasant dreams on their way home.

Supper No. 1: Bowls of Hot cream of celery soup; with a bit of crisp cheese-toast floating on top; Large platter of colorful relishes; Crackers; Hot spiced cider.

Supper No. 2: Broiled mushrooms on toast; Jellied fruit salad; Cinnamon cocoa and crisp cookies; Coffee for those who prefer it.

